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ABSTRACT

To investigate changes attendant upon the 1971 transfer of ownership of "The Windsor (Ontario) Star" from an independent owner to Southam Press Limited, owner of several Canadian newspapers, a content analysis was conducted of newspapers from the four-year period of independent ownership and the four-year period of Southam Press ownership surrounding the date of the transfer. Approximately 40 issues from each year were analyzed. All editorials and features on the editorial and opinion-editorial pages were examined with respect to area of interest, source of content, and direction of partisan political commentary. Editorial cartoons, letters to the editor, and front page lead stories were also examined. Among the major conclusions were that the change of ownership has not resulted in change in area of interest in any consistent pattern; that there has been a significant increase in the use of Canadian, rather than United States, sources in both front page leads and feature materials; and that more politically-oriented editorial and feature content is now being presented. The results suggest that the chain-ownership question cannot be dealt with adequately by the divergent hypotheses (socially desirable or undesirable) evident in the literature, but that the changes may be evaluated positively or negatively, depending on one's view of the role of a newspaper in a community. (GW)

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"THE SOUTHAM PRESS ACQUISITION OF THE WINDSOR STAR: A CASE STUDY OF CHANGE" *

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

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INTRODUCTION

With regard to the ownership of newspapers in the United States and Canada, a trend toward centralization and consolidation began at the turn of the century.[1] This trend toward chain ownership has been viewed with apprehension by those in both countries concerned with the functioning of democratic societies: ". . . the fundamental question is whether or not a successful chain is trying to run newspapers or build a financial empire, and whether its primary allegiance is to its readers or to current and prospective stockholders".[2] The social disadvantages of monopoly ownership are well understood, and the disadvantages apply to mass media as well as to general industry. However, the disadvantages take on a much more serious consequence when applied to mass media, because the commodity -- information -- is so vital to citizen understanding and participation in the political process.

In Canada today, the trend toward monopoly ownership of newspapers has evolved to the point where there are only nine cities[3] with more than one publishing daily paper - and, if one considers that in two of these (Victoria, B.C. and in Charlottetown, P.E.I.) the two dailies are owned by the same newspaper group, there are only seven communities with competing daily newspapers. Moreover, Canada's daily newspaper circulation is dominated by three major groups: Free Press; Southam; and Thomson.[4]

Southam Press currently vies with the Free Press group for dominance in daily circulation and coverage - but, if not the largest in terms of daily circulation, Southam Press continues to be the "oldest, largest, and most diversified media group in Canada".[5] As

a result of a corporate decision to divest itself of control of some of their broadcasting holdings in cities where it publishes daily newspapers, Southam Press interest in the electronic media has been that of investor only. Some of these broadcast holdings have been transferred to Selkirk Holdings Limited, a company in which Southam continues to be a shareholder.[6]

It has become obvious, however, that while Southam Press has been divesting itself of control of broadcasting interests, it has, at the same time, started to acquire ownership of further newspapers in Canada. At approximately the same time that Southam bid for, and assumed ownership of, The Windsor Star, it also assumed ownership of the Brantford (Ontario) Expositor.

The issue of The Windsor Star of 21 October 1971 featured on its front page the announcement of the Southam acquisition of the Star. In that announcement, St. Clair Balfour, the then President and Director of Southam Press Ltd., stated:

> The previous owners of the Windsor Star were old friends whom I admired and liked. Although I regret the family name will no longer be associated with the newspaper, we, at Southam Press are proud to have been given this opportunity to carry on their work. They were independent people, proud of their newspaper. We shall do our utmost to maintain this independence under the direction of the present management, all of whom have indicated their willingness to continue with the paper.
>
> We welcome Mark Farrell and his associates to the Southam group. It is the policy of Southam Press to encourage each of its newspapers to operate as an independent local unit whose main interest is the welfare of the community in which it is published.
>
> Southam Press has been in business since 1877 and is proud to be joined now by the Windsor Star. With its strength added, we look forward with confidence to the future and to our new association in Windsor, Ontario.[7]

A fuller statement of Southam Press attitudes toward newspaper ownership was offered by senior Southam Press officers when they appeared before the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media in early 1969. At that hearing Southam Press indicated that it was aware of the responsibilities of newspaper ownership, and in particular, the responsibilities of newspaper ownership in monopoly situations.[8] These declarations notwithstanding, the Chairman of the Special Senate Committee, Senator Keith Davey, commented in the Senate on the occasion of the Southam Press takeover of The Windsor Star, that if his Committee's recommendations concerning chain ownership had been followed, the takeover would not have been possible as a simple business transaction.[9]

Given the concern in Canada by scholars and government officials alike regarding the effects of chain ownership, this paper attempts to identify the changes, if any, associated with the Southam Press acquisition of The Windsor Star.

The Windsor Star from its birth had been an independently-owned newspaper. Beginning in 1888 as a weekly, the Windsor Record, and converted into a daily in 1890, the paper was purchased in 1918 by W. F. Herman, the former owner of the Saskatoon Star and Regina Post. The name of the paper was changed by Herman to the Border Cities Star. When the border communities which now comprise the City of Windsor were amalgamated in 1935, the name of the newspaper was changed to The Windsor Daily Star. In 1959, the word Daily was dropped from the title, and the name became, as it is currently, The Windsor Star. The newspaper remained in the hands of the Herman family and estate until its purchase by Southam Press Limited in 1971.[10]

METHODS

In order to investigate changes attendant upon the transfer of ownership of The Windsor Star, this study utilizes content analysis methodology and the case represents a classic before-and-after research design. We examined the four year period of Windsor Star Ltd. ownership as well as the four year period of Southam Press Ltd. ownership surrounding the date of the transfer. We decided upon a sample of approximately forty issues per year as an adequate size.[11]

Beginning each year with a different date chosen from a table of random numbers, we then selected every ninth issue of publication. If this date happened to fall on a non-publishing day, we moved ahead one issue if the non-publishing day was an even number, and backward to the previous issue, if the day was an odd number. The total number of issues sampled was 323, of which 166 were published under Windsor Star Ltd. ownership and 157 published under Southam Press Ltd. ownership.

It appeared to us that if change occurred it would most readily be discovered in those sections of the paper most representative of a newspaper's philosophies and policies -- the editorial and op-editorial pages. Therefore we examined all editorials and all features on these two pages with respect to area of interest, source of content, and direction of partisan political commentary. In addition, we looked at the area of interest of the editorial cartoon. Tapping other possible areas of change, we looked at the number of letters to the editor published in each issue as well as the area of interest and source of content of the Front Page lead

stories.[12] We assume that if change has occurred, these areas of content are sufficient to reveal that change.[13]

MAJOR FINDINGS

In light of the above introductory statements, alternative hypotheses concerning change associated with chain ownership are evident. Following the statements of Southam Press officials, one would hypothesize the relative absence of change. If, however, persuaded by the recommendations contained in the Davey Committee Report, one would be led to expect change. Our research was not guided by any preconceived notion of what the evidence on the above question might reveal. Rather, our research design simply allowed us to measure the amount and direction of any change that might have occurred.

A. Area of Interest:

Beginning with area of interest, the following kinds of the newspaper content were examined: Front Page Lead Stories, Editorial Cartoons, Editorials, and Features.

TABLE 1 AREA OF INTEREST OF FRONT PAGE LEAD STORIES, BY WINDSOR STAR AND SOUTHAM PRESS OWNERSHIP

	% WINDSOR STAR N=162	% SOUTHAM PRESS N=151
LOCAL	12.3	21.2
PROVINCIAL	8.6	11.9
NATIONAL	41.4	36.4
UNITED STATES	10.5	7.3
INTERNATIONAL	19.8	16.6
CANADIAN-AMERICAN	7.4	6.6

X^2 not significant
Cramer's V=0.14

Data in Table 1 indicate certain trends, which although not statistically significant, point to an increased attention to local and provincial stories and at the same time to a decrease in the selection of material from the national and international areas for front page lead stories. With specific reference to the relatively large increase in the number of local stories accorded front page lead status under Southam Press ownership, we must point out that this increase can be partly accounted for by a surge of local stories in one year (1974) under Southam ownership. This year notwithstanding, there does appear to be a somewhat greater emphasis on local and provincial events rather than on national and international matters in terms of lead front page stories after the ownership change.

TABLE 2 AREA OF INTEREST OF EDITORIAL CARTOONS, BY WINDSOR STAR AND SOUTHAM PRESS OWNERSHIP

	% WINDSOR STAR N=165	% SOUTHAM PRESS N=155
LOCAL	3.0	3.9
PROVINCIAL	4.2	6.5
NATIONAL	40.0	47.7
UNITED STATES	13.9	12.9
INTERNATIONAL	19.4	12.9
CANADIAN-AMERICAN	6.7	3.2
HUMAN INTEREST	12.7	12.9

X^2 not significant
Cramer's V=0.13

Looking next at the Editorial Cartoons, we see from data in Table 2, evidence of virtually no change in terms of area of interest

emphasis. While there is some indication of greater focus on national concerns as opposed to international areas on the part of Southam Press, this change can probably be best accounted for by a drop in activity and interest in the Viet Nam war in the early 1970's.

TABLE 3 AREA OF INTEREST OF EDITORIALS, BY WINDSOR STAR AND SOUTHAM PRESS OWNERSHIP

	% WINDSOR STAR N=642	% SOUTHAM PRESS N=481
LOCAL	19.0	17.5
PROVINCIAL	12.1	19.1
NATIONAL	35.4	34.9
UNITED STATES	6.7	8.1
INTERNATIONAL	10.4	9.8
CANADIAN-AMERICAN	5.3	8.7
HUMAN INTEREST	11.1	1.9

X^2 significant at .001
Cramer's V=0.20

With regard to the important category of Editorials, area of interest changes do become apparent. However, as we see from data in Table 3, the most significant change is a drop-off in human interest editorial content of nearly 10%, accompanied by a 7% increase in provincially-oriented editorial matter. Little, if any, change is evident in the areas of local, national, U.S., and Canadian-American subjects.

TABLE 4 AREA OF INTEREST OF FEATURES, BY WINDSOR STAR AND SOUTHAM PRESS OWNERSHIP

	% WINDSOR STAR N=861	% SOUTHAM PRESS N=776
LOCAL	3.6	3.0
PROVINCIAL	17.1	13.1
NATIONAL	38.4	44.3
UNITED STATES	14.4	10.1
INTERNATIONAL	18.1	25.1
CANADIAN-AMERICAN	2.9	3.4
HUMAN INTEREST	5.5	1.0

x^2 significant at .001
Cramer's V=0.17

When examining data from Table 4, dealing with feature material, we again see significant change. However, here a different pattern is evident. Provincial, U.S., and Human Interest feature materials are all reduced by approximately 4%, while National and International features have increased by 6% and 7% respectively.

Concerning the area of interest overall, we see that while changes have occurred in all areas, albeit of different magnitude, there is no consistent pattern to these changes. Thus, the increase in Local and Provincial interest which we saw reflected in the selection of front-page lead stories, is not necessarily indicative of a conscious decision to increase the focus in these areas. For, when we examine editorials, we see while there is an increase in coverage of Provincial matters, no increase in Local coverage is revealed. Furthermore, with Features, we see a decline in Provincial

coverage, combined with stability in the percentage of local coverage. Similarly, the decline in National and International front page interest is not seen when we look at Editorials, Cartoons, and Features, where in most cases, percentages have either remained stable or have, in fact, increased.

A conclusion one is forced to draw is that while such changes in area of interest did occur, their inconsistency reveals that factors other than ownership of the paper were responsible. These changes, we suggest, are more related to events and activities in society, both domestic and international, and to changes of publishers and perhaps newsroom individuals, rather than to change of ownership of the paper.

B. Source of Content:

At the time of the announcement of the Southam Press acquisition of The Windsor Star, St. Clair Balfour indicated in an interview with a Star reporter that some content change in the Star would be inevitable because of added access by the Star to Southam News Service (SNS) wire facilities. While this added source of copy was bound to produce some changes, Balfour made it clear that the addition of the wire service did not imply any Southam control over the Star's editorial behaviour or policy.[14]

Nevertheless, we felt that while it was obvious that some content changes might occur because of the added source facility, it was important to examine the kind and amount of change overall that may have been consequent to the Southam Press acquisition.

TABLE 5 SOURCE OF CONTENT OF FRONT PAGE LEAD STORIES, BY WINDSOR STAR AND SOUTHAM PRESS OWNERSHIP

	% WINDSOR STAR N=166	% SOUTHAM PRESS N=157
STAR LOCAL	24.7	29.3
STAR TORONTO	3.6	3.8
STAR OTTAWA	15.1	5.7
SOUTHAM NEWS SERVICE	0.0	9.6
CANADIAN PRESS	30.7	28.0
OTHER CANADIAN	2.4	8.3
UNITED STATES	16.3	11.5
OTHER	7.2	3.8

x^2 significant at .001
Cramer's V=0.31

Data in Table 5 indicate that certain changes in source of Front Page lead stories did indeed occur. While an overall decrease in the use of Windsor Star originated stories (local, Star Bureaus in Toronto and Ottawa) as Front Page leads is evident, this change is in effect accounted for by a nearly 10% decrease in the use of the Star Bureau reporter in Ottawa. There is virtually no change in the percentage of Front Page lead stories originating from the Star's Toronto Bureau, while there is an increase of approximately 5% in the use of local reporters' Front Page leads under Southam ownership. Concomitant with the decrease in the use of Star Ottawa Bureau leads, is the expected increase in the use of Southam News Service - in this case, of approximately 10%.

Canadian Press originated stories as Front Page leads are almost unchanged, while there is a nearly 6% increase in the use of other Canadian sources. The Front Page leads originating from

the United States decrease by approximately 5% under Southam Press ownership, and a somewhat less-marked decline in the use of non-North American sources is noted.

If we consider changes in content related to Canadian versus non-Canadian sources - and in the current social context such data are important indicators of the strivings of Canadian society to establish an independent identity - it is noted that an increase of 12% in the use of Canadian sources overall in Front Page lead stories has taken place under the new Southam Press ownership.

Under Southam Press, the Star's editorials, per se, have continued to be purely local in origin. Consequently, no comment on the editorial sources is required.

TABLE 6 SOURCE OF CONTENT OF FEATURES, BY WINDSOR STAR AND SOUTHAM PRESS OWNERSHIP

	% WINDSOR STAR N=876	% SOUTHAM PRESS N=791
STAR LOCAL	12.4	7.2
STAR TORONTO	13.9	7.5
STAR OTTAWA	16.6	3.0
SOUTHAM NEWS SERVICE	.2	26.3
CANADIAN PRESS	6.6	1.1
OTHER CANADIAN	20.4	33.1
UNITED STATES	21.9	17.8
OTHER	7.9	3.9

x^2 significant at .01
Cramer's V=0.48

With regard to Features, as is apparent from data in Table 6, considerable change in sources is evident. Moreover, the basic trends correspond to the changes noted earlier in the source of

content of Front Page leads. Under Southam Press ownership, a 25% decline is noted in the use of Windsor Star staff as writers of feature materials. In this case, the decline in the use of Star writers is not limited to the Ottawa bureau, as was the case with Front Page lead sources, but applies to local staff and Toronto Bureau as well.

It should be noted that this 25% decline can be accounted for quite readily by the obvious use of Southam News Service since it is apparent from the data that under new ownership, use of SNS feature materials increases by 26%. While the use of Canadian Press feature material decreases by approximately 5%, other Canadian sources of feature material actually increased by 13%. Overall, then, the Canadian content of feature material, with respect to source, under Southam ownership increases by 8%. As was the case with Front Page leads, the use of both United States originated material and non-North American material declined under the new ownership.

What becomes apparent from our examination of source of content, as St. Clair Balfour predicted was likely to occur, is that Windsor Star editors under Southam ownership have made use of the SNS wire services. It was noted during the period of data collection for this study, that effective use in this regard has obviously been made of the various world bureaus operated by SNS.

One can conclude, then, quite readily, that what current readers of The Windsor Star are receiving from Front Page leads and from material on the editorial and op-ed pages, is more of a Canadian perspective on matters of continental and international affairs than they received prior to the Southam acquisition of the Star.

C. Direction of Partisan Political Commentary:

In any discussion of newspaper ownership consolidation and centralisation, one of the first conclusions one is tempted to adopt is that as independent newspapers become absorbed by chains a particular "sameness" develops with respect to political direction - that is, the newspaper takes on the same political overtones in its copy as that demonstrated by its new owner.

There is evidence to support such a conclusion because some newspaper chains continue to be characterised by a centralised editorial policy concerning particular political issues.[15] At the same time, there is evidence to support the fact that startling differences in the editorial products of newspapers under the same ownership can be found.[16]

In this particular study, where all data derive from a single newspaper's activities, we can make no comparisons with other Southam-owned papers with respect to possible differences or similarities concerning partisan orientations. Nevertheless, there might be a tendency to assume that a previously independent paper acquired by a chain owner, would undergo a change in partisan political direction.

At the outset we indicated that it is possible to hypothesize that no change in editorial independence of the Star would follow the acquisition: It is also possible to hypothesize that change would result - depending upon which set of critical arguments tended to dominate.

Change, with respect to political commentary, has occurred in the content of the Star after Southam ownership was effected. In

some cases, these changes in content might be termed dramatic. For example, one can quickly recognize from the data which follow, that there has been a general and overall increase in partisan political commentary in both editorial and feature editorial material under Southam ownership. However, the consequences of this increased political content do not appear to be consistent with such social criticisms which decry chain ownership.

TABLE 7 DIRECTION OF PARTISAN POLITICAL COMMENTARY IN EDITORIAL AND FEATURE MATERIALS BY WINDSOR STAR AND SOUTHAM PRESS OWNERSHIP

Percentages

	EDITORIALS		FEATURES	
	WINDSOR STAR N=642	SOUTHAM PRESS N=481	WINDSOR STAR N=876	SOUTHAM PRESS N=791
PRO LIBERAL	6.7	6.9	6.7	3.2
PRO PROG-CONS	2.8	6.9	3.1	5.4
PRO N.D.P.	1.1	0.6	1.1	2.3
NON PARTISAN	89.4	85.7	89.0	89.1
	X^2 significant at 0.01 Cramer's V=0.09		X^2 significant at .001 Cramer's V=0.10	
ANTI LIBERAL	5.9	14.1	6.8	17.6
ANTI PROG-CONS	2.8	10.4	6.1	6.6
ANTI N.D.P.	0.0	1.0	1.6	1.3
NON PARTISAN	91.3	74.4	85.5	74.6
	X^2 significant at .001 Cramer's V=0.23		X^2 significant at .001 Cramer's V-0.16	

Table 7 presents data on the partisan direction of all editorial and feature materials. Two major conclusions are evident from an examination of these data. First, the pattern of partisanship for editorial and feature material reveals few, if any, differences:

where changes become apparent in one of these content categories, similar changes are also noted in the other. Second, we see an increase in partisan commentary, overall, under Southam ownership. Evidence of this increased concern with political evaluation is most noticeable in the area of negative (anti) commentary where increases of 16.9% and 10.9% occurred, respectively, in editorials and features.

Regarding the actual direction and magnitude of partisan commentary, it should be noted that during the eight-year period examined by this study, the government in power in the Province of Ontario was Progressive-Conservative while the government in power nationally was Liberal .

Data in Tables 8 and 9 are limited to an analysis of editorials and features which are related to Provincial or National matters. What is clear from these data is that the partisan direction of commentary of the Star under Southam Press ownership is not determined primarily by an attachment to one or another political party, but is determined rather by which party happens to be the government of the day at the Provincial or Federal level.

TABLE 8 DIRECTION OF PARTISAN POLITICAL COMMENTARY IN EDITORIAL AND FEATURE MATERIALS BY WINDSOR STAR AND SOUTHAM PRESS OWNERSHIP AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT (i.e. PROGRESSIVE-CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT)

	EDITORIALS		FEATURES	
	WINDSOR STAR N=78	SOUTHAM PRESS N=92	WINDSOR STAR N=147	SOUTHAM PRESS N=102
	Percentages			
PRO LIBERAL	1.3	0.0	1.4	1.0
PRO PROG-CONS	15.4	25.0	12.9	17.6
PRO N.D.P.	1.3	1.1	2.0	3.9
NON PARTISAN	82.1	73.9	83.7	77.5
	X^2 not significant Cramer's V=0.14		X^2 not significant Cramer's V=0.09	
ANTI LIBERAL	0.0	2.2	2.7	4.9
ANTI PROG-CONS	14.1	48.9	28.6	40.2
ANTI N.D.P.	0.0	1.1	4.8	2.0
NON PARTISAN	85.9	47.8	63.9	52.9
	X^2 not significant Cramer's V=0.40		X^2 not significant Cramer's V=0.15	

TABLE 9 DIRECTION OF PARTISAN POLITICAL COMMENTARY IN EDITORIAL AND FEATURE MATERIALS BY WINDSOR STAR AND SOUTHAM PRESS OWNERSHIP AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT (i.e. LIBERAL GOVERNMENT)

	EDITORIALS		FEATURES	
	WINDSOR STAR N=227	SOUTHAM PRESS N=168	WINDSOR STAR N=331	SOUTHAM PRESS N=344
	Percentages			
PRO LIBERAL	17.6	14.3	15.7	6.1
PRO PROG-CONS	2.6	5.4	2.1	7.0
PRO N.D.P.	2.2	1.2	2.1	4.1
NON PARTISAN	77.5	79.2	80.1	82.8
	X^2 not significant Cramer's V=0.08		X^2 significant at .001 Cramer's V=0.19	
ANTI LIBERAL	15.4	36.9	16.6	35.8
ANTI PROG-CONS	2.2	2.4	3.3	3.2
ANTI N.D.P.	0.0	2.4	1.8	2.3
NON PARTISAN	82.4	58.3	78.2	58.7
	X^2 significant at .001 Cramer's V=0.28		X^2 significant at .001 Cramer's V=0.22	

A second conclusion apparent from Tables 8 and 9 is that The Windsor Star under independent ownership tended to balance its favourable and unfavourable editorial commentaries with respect to each of the major parties. Moreover, there was a very slight tendency to evaluate positiviely the party in power at each level of government. This pattern was broken only by the large percentage of anti-Progressive Conservative feature commentary at the Provincial level.

This general balance of commentary is not to be found under Southam Press ownership, where a more vigorous political attitude

becomes clearly apparent. Generally, this vigour takes the form of commentary which is heavily unfavourable to the party in power.

It might be argued that this is not true if one looks at the favourable editorial commentary at the Provincial level related to the Progressive Conservative Party. We note, for example, that there is a nearly 10% increase in favourable Progressive Conservative editorials. But, we recognize the validity of our earlier statement that commentary is generally unfavourable to the party in power if we also examine the anti-P.C. editorial and feature commentary. Here we find 48.9% of negative editorial and 40.2% of negative feature commentary focussing on the Progressive Conservative Party. These represent increases of nearly 35% and 22% for editorial and feature content, respectively.

Turning to the national level (Table 9), we do not see parallel increases in positive editorial and feature material with respect to the Liberal Party. In the area of negative commentary, however, while the net increase in anti-Liberal editorials and features is marked over the levels which pertained under Windsor Star ownership, they are not as high as the negative levels found with respect to the P.C.'s at the Provincial level.

If we are to summarize in a general way what the data in Tables 8 and 9 reveal, it is that there is a strong tendency to comment unfavourably about the party in power, and a slight tendency to comment favourably about the party in opposition at the federal level. In that the Liberals, as the party in opposition at the Provincial level do not experience a similar increase in positive

editorial and feature commentary, this may indicate a slight preference on the part of Southam Press for the Progressive Conservative cause. However, this conclusion must be tempered by the fact that the P.C.'s Provincially come in for more unfavourable criticism than do the Liberals nationally . In fact, of all the data in the foregoing Tables, what is most clearly revealed is that the greatest single change in commentary, from independent ownership to Southam ownership, is in political commentary which is unfavourable to the P.C. Party at the Provincial level.

D. Public Input:

Our final area of data collection concerned Letters to the Editor, where we simply counted the number of letters published per issue. Under Windsor Star ownership, an average of 2.2 letters per issue were published. Under Southam Press ownership, the Star's average number of letters increased to 3 per issue. Averages in this regard might be misleading, since under Southam Press ownership, we find a greater number of issues where a relatively large number of letters are published (the greatest number being 15 letters in one day). Nonetheless, this results in an increase of nearly a letter per publication in the Star under the paper's new ownership.

CONCLUSION

In our study of change, it is realized that there are operative variables which will affect content change in a newspaper from period to period which are directly attributable to pure professional journalist-newsroom functions rather than to factors such as ownership. Despite who owns a newspaper, a journalist is likely to make

professional decisions about content according to the events that take place in his own and in the world societies.

Nevertheless, content analysis methodology, utilizing an adequate long-term and properly selected sample for study, can reveal preferences for a particular kind of content, as well as preferences for particular sources of material. It is in this sense that this study has focussed on an examination of changes which may have occurred as a consequence of new ownership - changes which may have resulted in a different "character" to the newspaper areas delineated by the data.

Reflecting on our findings in the light of our introductory discussion of possible effects of chain ownership, the following conclusions are apparent. With regard to the Area of Interest category, the change of ownership of the independent Star to Southam Press has not effected change in any consistent pattern. The approximate amounts of content of local, Provincial, National, International affairs, etc., over the eight-year period of this study, have undergone change, but the directions of change in the parts of the paper included in the study are not consistent.

Regarding Source of Content, however, at least two significant and consistent changes did occur. The first was a predictable one: The increase in use of Southam News Service Wire as a source of copy under the new ownership. The second, far more significant change, is the increase, overall, in the use of Canadian sources in the Southam Press Star in both Front Page leads and Feature materials. While this increase in overall Canadian sources may be attributable

to the addition of the wire service of SNS, a consequence of the use of increased Canadian originated materials is a drop-off of United States originated Front Page lead stories and Feature copy. If we examine these changes in the light of what mass media consumers in the Windsor area are accustomed to receiving, that is, a large daily volume of broadcast and print Detroit-originated content, then The Windsor Star under new ownership has managed to offer its readers a greater Canadian perspective. Further, this particular change should also be considered in the light of the Canadian society's stress upon developing more of its own media content sources.

Perhaps the change that is most clearly evident by this study is that the readers of The Windsor Star under its new owners are receiving more politically-oriented editorial and feature content than they did from the Star under independent ownership. Moreover, this political commentary is not geared to pressing the political fortunes of any one political party. Rather, what we see is a clear example of the traditional and expected role of the editorial pages of a newspaper as a critical force in society's political processes. The importance of this increased political vigour in these editorial pages should be noted as well in the light of the earlier discussion about North American society which today is characterised by one-newspaper communities. In this context, The Windsor Star has published as a newspaper monopoly in the Windsor community under both independent and group ownership. While political partisanship tended to be muted and balanced under independent ownership, we find that under new Southam ownership, the Star has assumed a stronger political

posture, with the pattern predicated on criticizing the party in power.

Whether Southam Press' publishing philosophy differs in monopoly situations from its philosophy in competitive newspaper communities (where Southam papers are also found), is unknown. In this case study dealing with a monopoly situation, the data do not show any consistent favourable or unfavourable stance of editorial page commentary towards any particular party other than the dominant critical posture assumed towards the party in power: a conclusion one arrives at then, is that the newspaper monopoly context within which The Windsor Star is published, does not appear to have led to abuse.

While we have established that changes in a number of areas did occur coincident with the change in ownership, it is a different matter to pinpoint specific agents or causal factors for that change. It is important to note that our data pertain to levels of association, which do not translate in any direct way to causality. While not wishing to belabour this point, the question of specific agents of change is indeed an important one.

There are clear dangers in trying to speculate in this matter: For example, one is tempted to suggest that a larger corporate philosophy of Southam Press may have introduced different operative concerns about what should be the social role of the editorial pages of a newspaper. However, our data would not support such speculation. A different kind of study, using alternative research methods about the philosophy of Southam Press, per se, would be necessary to establish this kind of causal relationship. Indeed,

such a different study would be an appropriate follow-up to what has been done here. Such a further study could also include a comparison of the current Windsor Star, as a Southam entity, with other Southam-owned newspapers. As well, similar case studies of other acquisitions of independent papers by Southam Press, or by any other large newspaper groups, could be undertaken.

Clearly, from our study we see that the chain-ownership question cannot be dealt with adequately by the divergent hypotheses (that is, socially desirable and undesirable) which are evident in the literature. Changes in The Windsor Star coincident with ownership change have occurred. These changes may be evaluated positively or negatively, depending upon one's view of the role of a newspaper in its community.

Central to such evaluation is the fact that at any point in history a society is faced with a number of social concerns, often conflicting. In this case, we see two conflicting concerns. One is a clear recognition that another independent newspaper, per se, is absent from the scene: And, this loss of an independent paper is evidence of the continuing trend of monopoly and consolidation in the industry. The negative consequence of such consolidation is seen in our study chiefly by the fact that the previously-independent Star bureau in Ottawa has virtually disappeared, being replaced by Southam News Service reporters. What has occurred is that a possible alternative perspective to events in the nation's capitol has been largely eliminated. In recognising that this trend of consolidation in Canada is continuing, it is possible to speculate that the Canadian

newspaper industry is likely to follow the pattern that characterizes the ownership of United States' newspapers. As Ben Bagdikian has recently pointed out, "Now that most independent dailies have been gobbled up, the chains are devouring chains".[17]

At the same time, we must view the changes in the Star, which are consequent to the Southam Press takeover, in the light of the larger national contextual framework wherein we find more and more individual media being evaluated in terms of how well or how poorly they contribute to nation-building. From this perspective, we find a greater expression of viewpoints ir the Star by Canadians about their own society and about international society, as well as an overall increase in the amount of Canadian material in the editorial pages of the paper.

We must assume that the Windsor community thus stands to benefit from this change, since this change is consistent with national aspirations concerning Canada's mass media, as these aspirations continue to be enunciated, formally and informally, in the Canadian society.

Footnotes

[1]See W. H. Kesterton, A History of Journalism in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967): p. 73. Professor Kesterton concludes that "The twentieth-century newspaper story is thus a story of consolidation and centralization." Also see Daniel B. Wackman, et al, "Chain Newspaper Autonomy as Reflected in Presidential Campaign Endorsements", Journalism Quarterly 52 (Autumn 1975): 411. The authors state, "In 1910 when there were 2,202 daily newspapers, 13 chains held 62 papers: In 1968 there were 1,749 dailies and 159 chains held 828 papers accounting for 58% of total daily circulation. That trend continues."

In Canada in 1970, chains accounted for 77% of daily newspaper circulation. See Canada, The Canadian Senate, Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, Vol. I The Uncertain Mirror (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970): p. 20.

[2]Walter A. Strong, "Newspaper 'Chain Gangs' Changing Times Changing Styles", Newspaper Production (April 1973): 51, as cited in Wackman, et al, supra. For Canadian critics of chain ownership see John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada (Toronto): University of Toronto Press, 1965); John Warnock, "All the News it Pays to Print," in Ian Lumsden, ed., Close the 49th Parallel etc.: The Americanization of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970); and Wallace Clement, The Canadian Corporate Elite: An Analysis of Economic Power (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975).

[3]The Uncertain Mirror: pp. 19-20. The cities are: Victoria, B.C.; Vancouver, B.C.; Calgary, Alta.; Winnipeg, Man.; Toronto, Ont.; Ottawa, Ont.; Montreal, P.Q.; Quebec City, P.Q.; and Charlottetown, P.E.I.

[4]These are the three dominant groups in terms of daily circulation: nearly half of daily newspaper circulation in Canada is controlled by these three. Other major groups include: Desmarais; Sifton; Toronto Star; and K. C. Irving.

[5]The Uncertain Mirror: p. 33.

[6]Annual Report 1968 (Toronto: Southam Press Limited, 1969).

[7]"The Star Sold to Southam", The Windsor Star, 21 October, 1971, p. 1.

[8]"The resulting trend toward fewer daily newspapers in most major Canadian cities has been partly offset by an increase in the number of broadcasting outlets, both radio and television. Cable television companies are now expanding rapidly in size and number to provide even more outlets for mass communication.

"Because this company accepts as a desirable goal an increase in the number of viewpoints being expressed within a community, it established a number of years ago a policy that it would not own or manage more than one mass communications outlet within any single community ...."

And, "We do not believe it is socially desirable for communications media to be owned and operated by individuals or corporations with other interests. It is almost inevitable, despite the erection of the most careful safeguards, that conflicts of interest will arise, or appear to arise. Such conflicts will have an inevitable effect on the media staffs involved and on their editorial independence".

See Brief Prepared for Presentation to the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media (Toronto: Southam Press Limited, 1969).

[9]Canada, The Canadian Senate, Debates of the Senate, Third Session, Twenty-Eighth Parliament Vol. II, Thursday 28 October 1971: p. 1406.

[10]The Windsor Star archives.

[11]A study, to determine whether differences in results would accompany random samples of various sizes, concluded that increasing the sample size beyond 12 issues of a daily paper for one year "does not produce marked differences in the results". See Guido H. Semple III, "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies," Journalism Quarterly 29 (Summer 1952): 333.

[12]This study is limited to an examination of the content of the editorial and op-editorial pages, and of the Front Page lead stories as found in the final editions of The Windsor Star. The term "Feature" refers to the content of those editorial pages that is normally by-lined, and that is not normally considered as originating with The Windsor Star editors on behalf of the paper: these were treated as "Editorials". Material on the editorial pages that is normally regarded as filler copy is not a part of the study. Such materials include one-liners, anecdotes, line caricatures and the like, which are filler standby copy rather than being prepared deliberately to amplify a particular event. Photographs on these pages are included only when they comprize the basic story matter:

They are not tabulated separately when they are simply adjuncts to a main text. Political direction of Editorial and Feature materials is determined by obvious approval or disapproval of a political party, its recognized representatives, or its recognizable policies or actions. When a single editorial or feature on the editorial pages contains more than one clearly distinct theme, only the first of these themes has been coded. While it is recognized that there exist five political parties in Canada, only three (Liberal, Progressive-Conservative, and the New Democratic Party) have had consistent and significant representation in the Provincial Legislature and the Federal Parliament, and were therefore included in the study. "Editorial Cartoon" refers to that cartoon which is placed immediately adjacent to the newspaper's main editorials. "Front Page lead" refers to the story on the Front Page of the paper which is recognizably dominant by virtue of its dominant headline or by its dominant placement on the page. "Area of Interest" of any copy is defined as follows: Local - dealing with the City of Windsor and Essex County; Provincial - dealing with the Province of Ontario; National - dealing with the Dominion of Canada and Provinces other than Ontario; United States - dealing with domestic events in the United States; International - dealing with events in non-North American countries and with relations between all national units.

[13]Using the formula for intercoder reliability $CR=\frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$, our combined coefficient of reliability was .91. See Ole R. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969): p. 140.

[14]See The Star's New Owner, The Windsor Star 23 October 1971, p. 49.

[15]See Wackman, et al, "Chain Ownership Autonomy": 420. The authors conclude that, "The direction of the findings of this study is clear. Chain ownership of newspapers discourages editorial independence in endorsing presidential candidates".

[16]See Ronald H. Wagenberg and Walter C. Soderlund, "The Influence of Chain-Ownership on Editorial Comment in Canada," Journalism Quarterly 52 (Spring 1975): 93-8; Also see same authors, "The Effects of Chain Ownership on Editorial Coverage: The Case of the 1974 Canadian Federal Election," The Canadian Journal of Political Science 9 (December 1976): 682-9.

[17]Ben H. Bagdikian, "Newspaper Mergers - The Final Phase", Columbia Journalism Review 15 (March/April 1977): 17.